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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[23 May 2015]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Economic Sanctions: Systematic Violation of Human Rights

Economic sanctions are imposed on Iran with different justifications. According to the Security Council[1] sanctions are applied to effectuate five main outcomes: conflict resolution, non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, democratization, and the protection of civilians. However, decades of sanctions demonstrate that these objectives are rarely attained and it is crystal clear that, despite the justifications made, economic sanctions target the ordinary people, especially the most vulnerable population including children and patients who bear the brunt of economic instability caused by pressures.

It is highly regrettable to witness the politically motivated sanctions violating vulnerable people's human rights while they are proved to have failed reaching their intended political goals.

- Despite the agreements made on facilitating medicine transfers to Iran, unfair economic sanctions are still threatening the lives of Iranian patients. Hundreds of thousands of Iranians with serious illnesses have been put at imminent risk by the consequences of international sanctions, which have led to dire shortages of life-saving medicines. The sanctions have also led to shortages of key medical supplies, blatantly violating the patients' right to life and right to health.

  Medicines have been exempted form sanctioned items by the sanctioning countries, however the sanctions put on Iran banking system have made any financial transactions almost impossible, limiting the country's access to medicine.

- Sanctions are pushing ordinary Iranians to the edge of poverty, destroying the quality of their lives: limiting their access to food, medical care, adequate housing, education and employment. They seriously violate the right to enjoy an adequate standard of living. In addition, the sanctions are targeting the people who are living on or under poverty line more than the other people, making it too difficult for them to make ends meet.

- Sanctions have slowed Iran's industrial and economic growth, considerably limited foreign investment and triggered national currency devaluation, hyperinflation, declining GDP and, last but not least, reduction of oil and gas production and export. The negative impact of economic sanctions on Iran overall economy is undeniable. Consequently, the process of development in the country is seriously affected by the sanctions.

The sanctions were supposed to create hate and discontent among people in Iran, in order to contribute to a regime change in the country, while a Gall up poll indicates that contrary results are achieved. Iranian people, suffering from the bitter consequences of economic sanctions, have developed a feeling of hatred toward the sanctioning countries' inhuman behaviour rather than the Iranian authorities. Half of Iranians surveyed in 2012 and 2013 held the United States most responsible for the sanctions, compared to around 10 percent who felt their own government was most responsible. Sixty-eight percent of men and sixty-two percent of women believed that Iran should continue to develop its nuclear power capacity despite the sanctions.[2]

Members of civil society have been expressing concerns about the notorious impact of the unilateral coercive measures on human rights, but the pledges have not been translated into results so far and the violation of Iranian people's rights sadly persists.

Simply put, if the real objective of the sanctions was to hurt ordinary Iranians, they have been successful. If they were intended to compel Iran to cease its current nuclear program, they have not only failed, but have actually resulted in

[1] . http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/UnilateralCoerciveMeasures.aspx#sthash.Xxpypua2.dpuf
[2] . http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/UnilateralCoerciveMeasures.aspx#sthash.Xxpypua2.dpuf

acceleration of the program, while blatantly violating the fundamental human rights of the most vulnerable part of the Iranian population.

The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) raises serious concerns about the violation of human rights, especially that of the vulnerable population, as a result of economic sanctions.

ODVV calls on the international community and the UN to re-consider the sanctions and their impact on the people's human rights and support and facilitate any sanction removing decisions.

ODVV also calls on the special rapporteur on UCM to study the detrimental impacts of sanctions on innocent people and inform the UN of the results.